

REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Office Action mailed August 16, 2006, within three months. Claims 1-13 were pending and the Examiner rejects claims 1-12 and objects to claim 13 as dependent on a rejected base claim. Applicants amend various claims, cancel claim 13, add new claims 14-20 and address the Examiner's remarks. Where the Examiner has indicated that claim 13 would be allowable if amended to incorporate the base claims, Applicants amend claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 13. Support for the amendments and new claims is found in the originally-filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments and new claim. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of pending claims 1-12 and 14-20 (19 total claims, 2 independent) in light of the following remarks.

A. Drawing Objections

The drawings were objected to for failure to show the claim features of the "lip and clasp" of claim 8. Applicants amend claim 8 to recite only the clasp portion of the locking mechanism which is indicated in the Figures by reference number 195.

The drawings were objected to for sharing of reference lines and omission of reference numbers 183, 193 in Figures 9a and 9b. Replacement Drawings Figures 9a and 9b are submitted including separate reference lines (165, 182 and 192) and reference numbers 183, 193 as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

B. Specification Objection

The disclosure is objected to because of wording errors that are corrected in amended specification paragraph [0040] submitted herewith.

C. Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7 and 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Patent No. BE 1013992. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection in light of the amendments to the claims.

Amended claim 1 recites “a first axle retainer having a first opening which receives one end of said blade axle and said second half includes a second axle retainer having a second opening which receives an opposite end of said blade axle, wherein said first and second axle retainers are configured with substantially coincident axle bearing surfaces and wherein said first and second openings in said first and second axle retainers are not coincident when said handle is in the closed position.”

As stated above, amended claim 1 incorporates the limitations of claim 13, which claim the Examiner has already indicated would be allowable if amended to incorporate independent claim 1. Furthermore, whereas claims 2-7 and 9-12 depend from claim 1, these claims are likewise allowable for the same reasons, in addition to their own respective features. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection be withdrawn with respect to the claims as amended.

C. Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious over BE 1013992 in view of Patent No. 733,511, issued to Ridgely ("Ridgely"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Whereas claim 8 depends from claim 1, this claim is likewise allowable for the same reasons discussed above, in addition to its own respective features. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection be withdrawn with respect to claim 8.

D. New Claims 14-20

New claim 14 likewise contains the subject matter of claim 13, which claim the Examiner has already indicated would be allowable. Claims 15-20 depend from claim 14 and contain all of the elements thereof. Therefore, Applicants assert that new claims 14-20 are differentiated from the cited references at least for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 13, in addition to their own respective features.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the currently pending claims properly set forth that which Applicants regard as their invention and that these claims are allowable over the cited prior art.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (602) 382-6544 at the Examiner's convenience, if that would help further prosecution of the subject Application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-2814. **This statement does NOT authorize charge of the issue fee.**

Respectfully submitted,

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